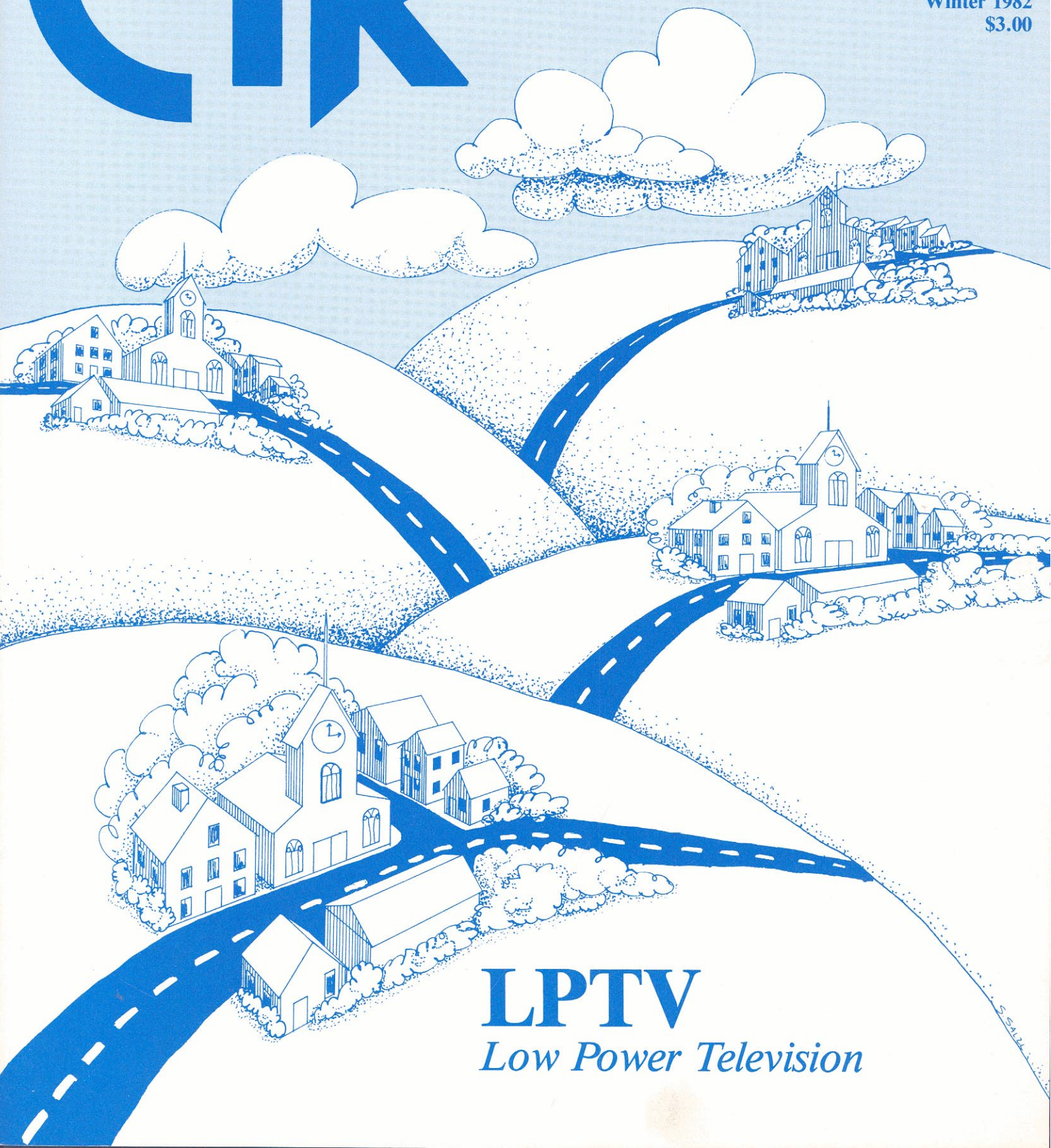


CTR

Community Television Review

Winter 1982
\$3.00



LPTV
Low Power Television



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eh wot's that!

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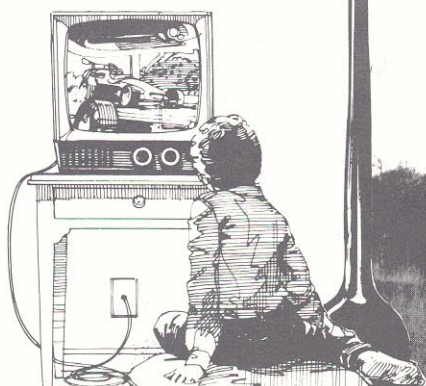
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March 1 Deadline, Action for Children's Television, "Achievement in Children's Television Awards."

Contact: ACT, 46 Austin Street, Newtonville, MA 02160.

March 6 Deadline, Atlanta Independent Film and Video Festival (April 14-18), High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA. Contact: Image Film/Video Center, 972 Peachtree Street, Suite 213, Atlanta, GA 30309. Linda Dubler, Festival Director, (404) 874-4756.

March 12 Deadline for reply comments on FCC proceeding to permit broadcasters to offer teletext services. Contact: FCC, Washington, D.C.

March 15-17 Fourth National Conference on Communications Technology in Education and Training, Park Plaza Hotel, Boston, MA. Sponsored by Emerson College, American Society for Training and

Development and GTE Laboratories, Inc. Contact: Conference Headquarters, c/o Information Dynamics, Inc., 111 Claybrook Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20902.

March 26-27 Central States Regional Conference, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio. Contact: Don Langley, (513) 475-5977.

April 4-7 National Association of Broadcasters, 60th Annual Convention, Dallas Convention Center.

April 5 Deadline, CPB/Annenberg School of Communications Project, July round of allocations. Contact: Tom Otwell, CPB, 1111 16th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 293-6160.

April 6-7 "The Legal Realities of Antitrust, Patents, Trademarks and Licensing," U.S. Telecommunications Suppliers Association seminar, Hyatt O'Hare, Chicago.

April 14-18 Atlanta Film and Video Festival, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA.

April 16-18 Midwest Regional Conference, Iowa City, Iowa. Contact: Dave Olive, (319) 264-5660 or Karen Kalergis (319) 338-7035.

May 3-5 National Cable Television Association Annual Convention, "Cable Delivers!" Las Vegas.

Contact: Ed Dooley, (202) 775-3629.

May 4-8 31st Annual Convention, American Women in Radio and Television, Hyatt Embarcadero, San Francisco.

May 16-18 Municipal Administration of Cable TV Workshop, University of Wisconsin/Extension, Madison, Wisconsin. Speakers include: Jean Rice, Frank Greif, Anne Davis and Andy Beecher. Contact: Barry Orton, UW-Extension Communication Programs, 610 Langdon St., Madison, WI 53706, (608) 262-3566.

June 10-13 American Film Institute Bi-Coastal National Video Festival, East Coast, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.

June 24-27 AFI West Coast Festival, Los Angeles, CA. For information on both events contact: James Hindman, Festival Director, (202) 828-4013.

June 24-27 Public Broadcasting Service Annual Meeting, Crystal City Hyatt, Arlington, VA.

July 8-11 5th Annual Convention of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers, Radisson St. Paul Hotel, St. Paul, Minnesota. Further details in the April issue of *Community Television Review*.

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**Community
Television
Review**

Volume 5 No. 1

If you know of upcoming conferences, meetings, festivals, screenings or other special events, please tell us about them. Send all information to CTR Calendar, c/o University Community Video, 425 Ontario SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

Arts/Cable Conference Site for Exchange of Policies, Ideas.

by Lilly Ollinger

A motley crew of artists, administrators, independents and cable representatives gathered in Minneapolis for a conference on cable and the arts in early November, 1981. The Arts Cable Exchange, as it was called, was sponsored by University Community Video in Minneapolis. True to its name, the conference did produce a lively exchange of ideas, fantasies, speculations and concerns.

The idea of a marriage of the arts and cable was enthusiastically embraced by all: artists and arts organizations want the expanded audience that cable can provide and the cable operators and networkers are looking for quality programming.

It is unclear whether their aims are really compatible and whether the economics make sense. Those with cable access experience warned that while franchisers say "I will," they mean as long as it is economically and politically expedient.

Jay April, the Director of Programming for a Phoenix, AZ, cable system, warned of the National Cable Association's attempts to have municipally regulated access ruled unconstitutional. Other industry representatives cautioned that many arts channel proposals were based on leased access and did not have strong enough guarantees for continued support. The presence of cable people like Mr. April, however, shows that many see the new generation of cable/arts cooperation as a necessity, evidenced by the cable arts channels being written into many urban franchises such as New Orleans and Tucson.

Performing arts groups and museums discussed ways to broaden and educate their audiences, as well as the possibilities of interactive events. Chicago expatriate, Barbara Kossy, reported on a successful cable show out of Berkeley California, called *Artwaves*, which involves local artists in presenting their works and ideas.



Other artists were more concerned with using cable TV as an art form rather than as a tool for audience development and understanding. Michael Hazard of the CIE in St. Paul showed some wonderful artist-made tapes and poetry media that eloquently spoke to the potential for television becoming an artists' medium. Jaime Davidovitch, of the Artist Television network, which has been working to have artists' programming shown on cable with an eye to possible satellite fed national distribution, also showed great potential. The audience is ready according to Davidovitch, and judging from the favorable results of an experiment on Warner QUBE system, he's probably right. (Davidovitch will be in Chicago as an Artist-In-Residence at the Chicago Editing Center on March 11.

The markets that are in place for national distribution may not be as ready as the audience or the independent artist. CBS cable was very visible

at the conference, as was the planned cable service of PBS, but none of the other national arts services were out hunting independent arts programming. Nick DeMartino, an independent producer and consultant, gave an update on the satellite services.

Though hungry for programming, the services are operating in the red and are concerned with carving out their own identities and audiences in a very competitive new market.

Though many of the program services would rather produce series in-house than buy independent programming, there are some pleasant exceptions, notably, Stevenson Palfi's independently produced documentary on New Orleans piano players, "Piano Players Rarely Play Together," which recently sold to CBS cable. Cable is looking for drama and dance as witnessed by the Guthrie's and Children's Theatre's success in Minnesota.

A word of caution may be in order, however; many of the arts program services are pay and the uplinks are looking for an upscale audience to foot the bill. PBS's entry into the new markets, as described by Senior Vice President Suzanne Weil, will be directed at a cultural elite, with the idea that programming and profits will filter down to local stations and produce better local programming as a result.

Maybe so, but more experimental work and smaller arts organizations may be left out in the cold as the markets settle in.

In order to insure that the idea of narrowcasting doesn't get defined too narrowly and that local artists are insured access, work is needed on the local level. The Keynote speaker, Kathleen Nolan, served to inspire her audience on this point. If she has her way, Los Angeles' East Valley will have a renaissance of cable arts, and just to make sure, she bought a piece of the cable company.

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From Translators to LPTV: New Opportunities Open for Local Programmers

by Parry D. Teasdale

Low power television is a lot like the emperor's new clothes. The grandiloquent build-up for this first new broadcast service in 20 years has encouraged many people to see all kinds of new and radically different opportunities. Lured by the promise of extraordinarily low costs (some stations could be built for less than \$50,000), and by proposals for a minimum of regulation, community groups and major financial interests have found themselves competing for the same frequencies. It is by no means clear, however, that local programming will take precedence over pay TV movies, syndicated re-runs and corporate propaganda. The reason is that low power television (LPTV) is not marching into the world of telecommunications naked as a jaybird. It is a service with a history as well as a promising, if cloudy, future.

There already is an extensive low power television broadcast service functioning throughout the United States. It consists of thousands of small transmitters called translators, which range in power from one to 1000 watts. Translators are designed to re-transmit the signals of distant TV stations to communities where over-the-air reception would otherwise be impossible.

Like cable TV, translators were developed as a way of overcoming the holes in the coverage of regular broadcast stations. Cable is economically feasible where homes are close together. Translators, because they send their signals over the air, are far less costly for covering large, sparsely populated areas. Typically, translators provide good reception from five to 35 miles from the transmitter.



Origins of LPTV

As cable systems were built in the wake of TV stations going on the air in the more densely populated eastern half of the country, translators grew up bringing TV reception to the wide open spaces of the rural West.

Nothing could have been more apple-pie-American-spirited than the local organizations that built and supported the early translators. By the late '50s, Rotary clubs, school districts, local governments, and TV repairmen were all involved in putting these low power systems on the air. Though it should have been a simple matter for the FCC to license translators, it wasn't. In its infinite wisdom, the government agency charged with seeing to it that all the country got TV, decided that translators were a bad idea. The FCC even went so far as to try to shut some of them down.

Western politicians, however, recognized and supported the service translators provided their rural constituents and finally sparked a series of confrontations that forced the FCC to authorize the service. Acting reluctantly under the political pressure, the Commission exacted its price by imposing severe restrictions on translator operation.

Among the most crippling of the federal rules were the ones that forbade translators from originating more than 30 seconds per hour of their own programming. All the rest of their broadcasting time had to be spent re-transmitting the signal of a single TV station received over the air. The result of this restriction was to deprive translator operators of their most readily available and effective means of supporting themselves — solicitation on the air.

The FCC Inquiry

Under Nixon's FCC Chairman, Richard Wiley, an official inquiry was begun into how to ease the regulatory restrictions on the translator service. It was not until Carter's appointee, Charles Ferris, took office, however, that new translator rules were actually drafted. Ferris' staff came up with recommendations that proposed no limit on the amount of time a translator could originate; nor did the staff propose any limit on the source from which translator programming could come. In other words, translators would no longer be restricted to the simple rebroadcast of signals from existing TV stations.

Under the staff proposals, translators would be allowed to use any means available to create their programs including, though by no means limited to, video cassette recorders, satellite receiving dishes, low cost cameras, and, character generators. The staff went even further in proposing solutions to the perennial financial plight of translator operators. Recommendations were put forward that would allow translators to encode, or "scramble," their signals in a manner not much different from the method used by cable TV with its premium movie channels. Only those viewers who leased or purchased descramblers would be able to receive an intelligible picture.

As an adjunct to all these proposals, Ferris' staff suggested no technical restrictions be placed on the origination equipment, a major departure from the existing broadcast standards.

In the process of producing their proposals, the FCC staff had re-examined virtually all the rules governing conventional TV stations (called "full service stations") as well as those covering translators. The document they issued amounted to a blueprint for a brand new type of television service and, thus, the name Low Power Television came into being. With the staff approach, translators were to become a type of low power station, allowed to change their operation to origination mode almost at will.

On September 9, 1980, the seven

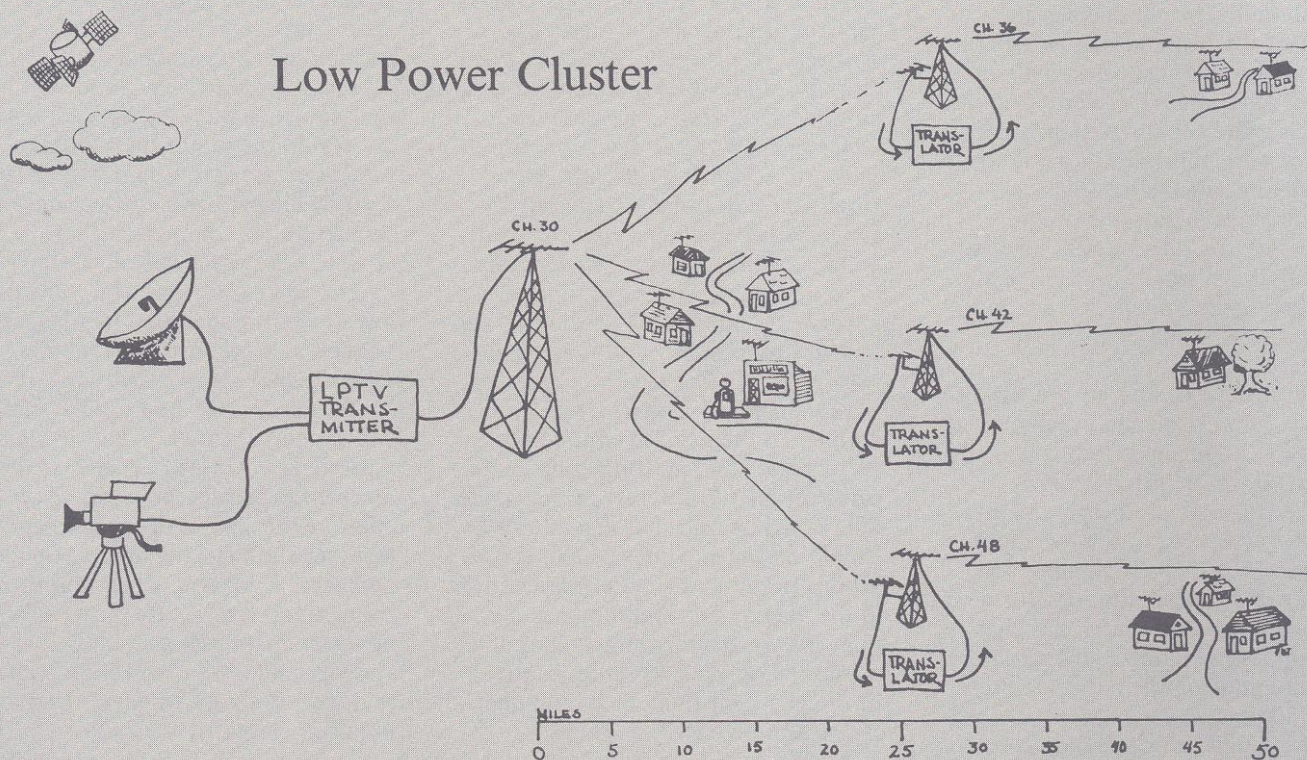
FCC Commissioners unanimously approved the staff's LPTV proposals. With that vote, the staff was charged with soliciting public comments and then with drafting the final rules, the standard procedure for a regulatory body. This early victory for the new service garnered considerable media attention and led to the false impression that the low power rules were complete and ready to go.

Opposition From Broadcasters

Conventional TV broadcasters and their representative organizations had already registered skepticism over the efforts the Commission staff was making; but they were caught off guard by the Commission's near unbridled sup-

port for low power TV. Their real objection was that LPTV would represent new and unsettling competition in an industry that was girding for a major battle with cable TV and new technologies.

The broadcasters' first line of defense was to claim that there was no indication of the need for a new television service. Where, they asked, was the public outcry for more TV? Measuring the needs of the disenfranchised, of course, has always been a knotty problem. How were rural communities and minority groups, which suffer from one form or another of inadequate television service, supposed to know whether low power TV would meet their needs if they had never been offered the chance to have it?



This drawing illustrates how a typical 100 watt UHF low power television (LPTV) station can extend its effective coverage area by the use of a system of translators, called a cluster. The basic LPTV facility is shown at the left. It is programmed by a combination of satellite-delivered material through the dish-shaped earth station antenna, and by locally produced shows represented here by the camera (although it could as easily be a character generator or

a VCR). The program source is fed to the LPTV transmitter and broadcast to the community in which the station is located.

In neighboring communities, which might have a difficult time receiving the direct signal from the LPTV station, traditional translators are set up to rebroadcast the signal of the LPTV station on a different channel. Under the proposed LPTV rules, these translators could also be programmed locally.

The mileage scale at the bottom of the drawing is a general indication of the distances that the signal from a 100 watt station will travel and still provide a watchable picture. The real coverage area of a station will vary according to the local terrain, the transmitting antenna of the station, and the extent to which viewers' receiving antennas are oriented toward the LPTV station or one of the cluster translators. (Drawing by Parry D. Teasdale ©1981)

The opponents of LPTV assumed the Commission's inability to answer this conundrum would put a cap on the staff's low power television initiatives with the result that the plans for the service would be shelved for what was clearly a lack of public demand.

They were dead wrong. Under Chairman Ferris' direction, the Commission vote that approved the proposed LPTV rules also endorsed a policy of accepting LPTV applications at once. Those that were uncontested were to be licensed on a temporary basis immediately instead of having everybody wait until the final rules were complete.

The staff reasoned that this approach, called *interim processing*, would end the controversy about the public interest in LPTV. Allowing applications to be filed without delay, they thought, would uncover the extent of the demand before the crucial vote on the final rules that would seal the fate of LPTV. Ferris and the staff also knew that once some LPTV licenses were approved, it would be virtually impossible for subsequent Commissions to stop the progress of the service. To do so would involve shutting down legally authorized stations serving the public, an act any Commission would be loathe to undertake.

The strategy of interim processing uncovered more demand than anyone at the FCC had suspected. It was so successful, in fact, that it nearly destroyed the service before the first license was issued. In the five months that followed the first Commission vote, over 4,000 applications for new LPTV stations were received. That's as many as the number of translators that had gone on the air in the previous 30 years.

During that same five month period, Carter was swept out of office and Reagan appointed a new FCC Chairman, Mark Fowler, and two new Commissioners. He also reappointed one sitting Commissioner, giving the Republicans a clear majority. Meanwhile, the people in the Commission's translator processing bureaucracy threw up their hands in an administrative panic and begged their bosses, the Commissioners, to cease accepting most new LPTV and translator applications.

The interregnum commission bowed to the bureaucracy, and in April of 1981 imposed a partial freeze on the acceptance of new applications.

Republicans to the Rescue

The freeze was delightful news for established broadcasters and other entrenched telecommunications interests who had no stomach for new competition. Their public stance supported the freeze as the most judicious way to proceed until the final rules were approved. Privately, they were hoping that LPTV would simply be forgotten in the crush of other business before the FCC. What they did not count on was that the 1980 election had awarded significant political clout to the translator operators.

Actions on simple requests from the traditional rural translator operators got buried in the mountains of LPTV applications which were being treated exactly the same.

This situation raised a political problem for the Commission. Translators are concentrated in states like Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. Senators like Barry Goldwater, Paul Laxalt and Orin Hatch, no political lightweights with the new administration, were receiving calls and letters from irate constituents to whom TV service was being denied by the inadequacies of bureaucratic Washington.

So instead of slipping into a quiet paperwork limbo, LPTV began to surface in unexpected ways. One of those ways was the 1982 federal budget legislation in which Congress specifically authorized the FCC to conduct lotteries to decide among competing applicants for LPTV licenses. In that same bill, Congress said that any lottery should be weighted in favor of those groups traditionally under represented in the media, and went on to name minorities, women, labor unions and community groups as representatives of the groups it thought should qualify for a preference.

As this article is written, it would appear the FCC will not be able to implement a lottery suitable for LPTV. Yet in order to satisfy Congress, the Commission will have to start moving. One tack they may try is to start from the outside and work in, granting translator and LPTV licenses to the most rural communities where TV reception is least available. If the FCC does choose this approach, it would undoubtedly be several years from now before license decisions are finally made for the biggest cities.

Economic Reality

The translator service has its roots in the small communities of the rural West. And indeed, the impetus for the current LPTV proposals stems directly from the pressure brought by translator people in those communities as they searched for more practical means of support. It would be wise for community programmers to keep in mind that the acute need felt by these communities was not for local programming, but rather for local advertising and for flexibility in choosing the paths by which outside programs were delivered.

The concept of local programming on LPTV stations did not attain prominence until the gold rush months between the LPTV vote and the imposition of the partial freeze, when it became apparent to entrepreneurs that originating translators represented what could be a vast economic opportunity. Suddenly, as they saw it, a way was opened to the TV sets in the major metropolitan centers of the nation that was cheaper than owning either a conventional full service TV station or a cable TV system. Like practically everything else in telecommunications, the benefits of low power broadcasting had begun to be measured against an economic, rather than a social, yardstick.

The question of how LPTV stations will support themselves has no single answer. Survival will depend on the market the station serves and how effective the station operator is at defining and reaching an appropriate audience. A lot will depend on the competition too. As the proposals now stand, for instance, cable TV systems could not own LPTV stations that were designed to cover the communities passed by the cable.

On the other hand, the proposals recommend that cable companies not be required to carry the signals of local LPTV stations in the way they are required to carry nearby full service stations. This will present a problem for LPTV operations in communities where cable penetration is extensive, but channel capacity is limited. Low power TV stations may well find themselves leasing channels in order to ensure that viewers hooked to the cable will receive their LPTV signal.

The cable/LPTV situation may also mean that community programmers with strong access or local origination commitments from cable operators may find themselves in extraordinarily strong bargaining positions with LPTV station operators, exchanging access to the LPTV station's facilities in return for finding a channel on the cable for the LPTV station.

In major cities, the carriage of LPTV stations on the cable is less likely to become an issue. The new systems that are being built, or shortly will be, and the reconstruction of older systems will provide ample channel capacity. Without appearing on the cable, LPTV stations in the cities will suffer the severe technical problems already described.

Marketplace Competitors

For both advertiser supported and subscription LPTV operations, cable represents strong competition. The abundance of available pay services a sophisticated cable system can deliver will be far more economically attractive to potential subscribers than the single channel an LPTV station can offer. As cable systems move their local origination activities more and more into the realm of conventional advertiser supported TV, low power stations and cable local origination (L.O.) channels will find themselves in heated competition for the same advertising dollars.

At the same time, it would be ludicrous if cable access programmers were to compete with non-commercial, community based, LPTV stations for the same audiences. Where interests converge, resources, talent, and time would logically seem to follow.

The one big loser to LPTV is likely to be existing public TV stations. A basic 100 watt UHF low power TV station could be built for about the same amount of money many public TV stations lay out each year to pay the electricity bills for their transmitters. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which originally endorsed the LPTV concept (and had built and helped program several "mini-stations" in Alaska), did an about face on the service when the PBS stations began to complain that LPTV stations would be competing with them for audiences, and, more important, for funding.

It is perhaps indicative of the extent to which the stations felt challenged by low power television that CPB waged a long, costly, and ultimately ineffectual battle at the FCC and in federal court to halt the progress of LPTV. While that was going on, the stations decided to hedge their bets and apply for LPTV stations themselves, which had the effect of placing them in competition with community groups for scarce channels.

Commercial stations are less likely to feel the immediate effect from LPTV. Most LPTV stations will not be granted affiliate status with the three major networks, which will tend to limit their audiences. Independent full service UHF stations are most likely to suffer from competition with LPTV stations that can come up with attractive program schedules.



Other technologies like the microwave subscription TV service called Multi-Point Distribution Service (MDS), will also feel the competitive presence of LPTV stations. On the other hand, scrambled LPTV operations will be hard pressed to win subscribers away from MDS systems already on the air.

The one unknown competitive factor is Direct Broadcast Satellites (DBS), a service more speculative even than LPTV. DBS is a term that encompasses the schemes presented to the Commission by several major companies including Comsat and CBS. In general, they propose to broadcast several channels of TV programming simultaneously to large segments, or all, of the nation. DBS differs from what the networks now offer in that the middleman role of the local affiliate station is eliminated. DBS viewers would have to lease or purchase small, roof mounted dish shaped antennas and channel decoders in order to watch what the satellites have to offer.

The Unique Opportunity of LPTV

While DBS would undoubtedly offer stiff competition to LPTV subscription stations, the one thing the satellite service can never provide is any sort of local programming. DBS shows will originate from one or two central sources and flow one way to the nation. In the DBS world of near ultimate centralized control over information and entertainment, low power TV stands out as a beacon of community identification, its very technological limits a strong argument for its absolute right to exist.

Cable TV and conventional full service broadcast stations have been offered the chance to enhance the local character of television for more than thirty years; and neither service has yet distinguished itself in that regard. Cable operators fought long and hard to overturn the federal rules requiring them to make local channels available to the public. Broadcasters have consistently eschewed local productions in favor of network and syndicated fare.

LPTV is now preparing to march into the world of American television, full of promise, unsullied by past failure, the child of a community service, and a technology well suited to the limited resources of this and future economies. It is a service that will be born not because this administration of the FCC particularly wants it, but because the conservative congressional supporters of the administration are tired of hearing from their constituents about its labor pains.

Once it does come into being, LPTV's most powerful friends will be those who think they can make the most money from it. Community programmers will not help themselves, or the positive growth of the service, by failing to face up to its naked economic and political realities. The challenge to them is to realize their strengths within the promise of LPTV and to make community programming an indispensable component of low power television's growth.

Parry D. Teasdale is an independent producer, cofounder of Lanesville TV (one of the first LPTV stations in the country) and General Partner in the consulting firm The Television Center in Washington, D.C.



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AccessProfile

Four Diverse Operating Models Pave the Way for Low Power TV

*"A rose by any other name
would smell as sweet."*

by Terrell Lamb

Just as Juliet understood that Romeo was Romeo no matter what his name, the world of low power television operates under many guises. More specifically, the concept of low power includes much more than that which the FCC licenses as LPTV. In actuality, only one LPTV construction permit has been granted by the FCC in the lower 48 states, and that to a midwest commercial broadcast entrepreneur, John Boler. But Boler is far from the average LPTV applicant — he has already spent more than \$465,000 on his one kilowatt TV translator station on Channel 26 in Bemidji, Minnesota; Channel 26 will be much better staffed and more productive than many a full service station in much larger markets.

On the other hand, even though the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) broadcast system is authorized to broadcast extensive amounts of locally originated programming over low power transmitters in New York State, technically it's not LPTV because it's licensed under the rules and regulations governing full service stations.

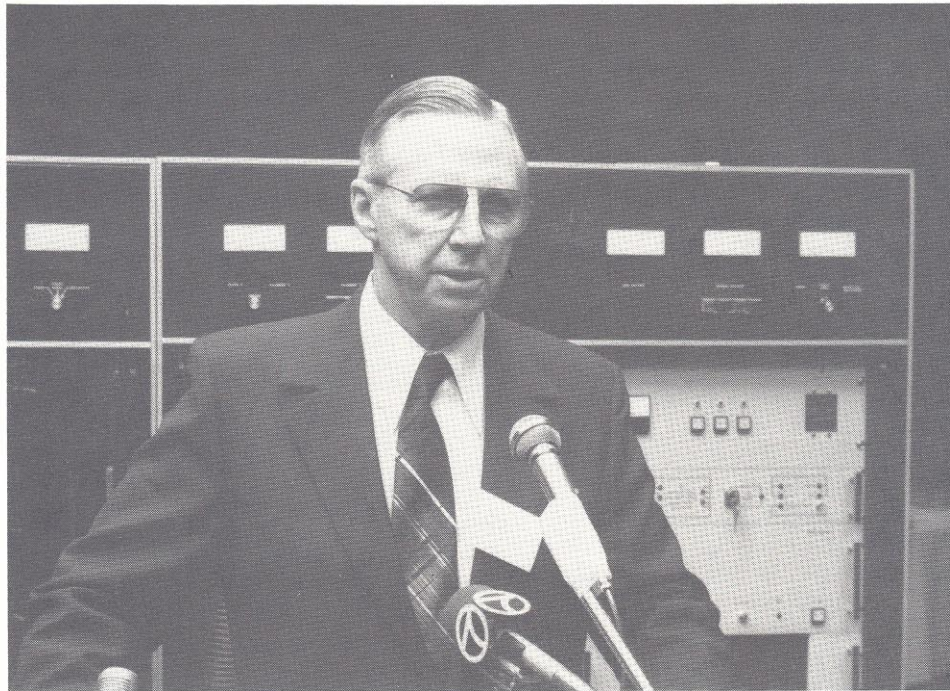
Similarly, while UHF Channel 45 in Eagle Bend, Minnesota, is a low power station in terms of distance covered, equipment used and the programming philosophy of community access, it's licensed by the FCC as an experimental combination of ITFS (Instructional Television Fixed Service) and low power. And while there are two year-long experimental pure low power licensees on the air right now, they both are affiliates of the Spanish International Network (S.I.N.) which won't allow them to do any local origination.

There is low power TV in some 200 Alaskan communities, but there has long been a policy for treating Alaska differently at the FCC because of the unique telecommunications situation created by the state's vast distances, rugged terrain and sparse population. Therefore, in a regulatory sense, the success of Alaska's low power network has no effect on licensing low power in the rest of the country.

Nevertheless, in examining the existence of low power television today, it is these four on-air systems (BOCES, Eagle Bend, S.I.N. and Alaska) that best point to the original intentions of the service — to provide television in remote areas of the country and to diversify service, including supplying minorities with a broadcast voice.

New York's BOCES Network

New York State was the site of the first translator system licensed to present regular local originations. It was back in 1966 that Dr. Frank Cyr, on behalf of the Board of Cooperative Educational Services, submitted a series of translator applications to the FCC designed to bring public television into certain remote areas of the Catskill Mountains. But Dr. Cyr's proposed system went beyond one that would function primarily in the rebroadcast mode of translators; it would also be allowed to pick and choose its own programming from PBS and it would be able to produce and broadcast its own programs in the same manner as any full service station.



John Boler, Channel 26, Bemidji, Minnesota.

Today that series of translator services has grown to eight originating systems in the state, which in turn employ 91 translators with another seven in the planning stages. While the total coverage area of the system is about one-third of the state, each individual system covers a geographic area of anywhere from five to 15 school districts. According to Bill Humphrey, Superintendent of Engineering for the New York State Education Dept., the cost of each system varies depending primarily on how remote the site of the facility. He says an average system with five 10 watt and five 100 watt translators, on both UHF and VHF frequencies, costs about \$50,000 to \$70,000 a year to maintain.

"All of the money comes from local tax dollars and state grants. But, because of state and federal cutbacks, every year there is less money granted and therefore, less local programming produced.

"I feel it's very difficult for rural areas to support the LPTV concept on local dollars only because you have a large geographical area with a sparse population. All the same, we go on and hope for the best because we believe rural taxpayers deserve to see public television just like urban taxpayers deserve it."

Most BOCES translators are on the air from 6 a.m. until about 2 a.m. daily. Besides rebroadcasting PBS programming, they broadcast classroom-oriented and other special programming. Examples include: The Brain Game, which is modeled on the old G.E. Bowl, using regional contestants and moderators; Dateline Chautauqua, a video D.J. program airing five mornings a week with information about job opportunities, school closings and the county's new emergency medical ambulance corps; and Meet Your Local Candidates, using the non-partisan League of Women Voters as moderators.

Humphrey looks forward to the day the FCC low power rulemaking is complete. "While it doesn't affect us directly, it will definitely give us more credence. You know, sometimes, it's hard to fight a battle by yourself."

Eagle Bend, Minnesota

Eagle Bend UHF Channel 45 utilizes two-way telecasting, called communica-ting, which grew out of a concern that the public airwaves would be inundated with commercial TV and lost for two-way educational use. By audio-visual interaction with two neighboring schools, the channel is seen as a way to help beat the problem of declining enrollments that is forcing small schools to consolidate or close. Eagle Bend School Superintendent Will James explains:

"There weren't enough students in any of the three schools to warrant a foreign language teacher. With communicating we can serve three school districts with one German teacher."

The system works like this: A high school German teacher in the Eagle Bend classroom is watched on a monitor by students in neighboring school Bertha-Hewitt, in a small studio-classroom seven miles away. Student responses there are picked up by a camera and sent back to the Eagle Bend classroom via another two-way monitor. The students in Eagle Bend, Bertha-Hewitt and neighboring community, Clarissa, can interact back and forth as if they were in the same classroom.

Channel 45, on the air since the Fall of 1980, has an experimental license which is a combination of Instructional Television Fixed Service and low power. Besides its capacity to act as a two-way classroom, the station is an attempt to bring more television to a very rural area.

Eagle Bend is in the heart of Minnesota prairieland. Life for the population of about 550 residents centers around the traditional family farm. In terms of mass media, three radio signals are received off-the-air from other towns, and Eagle Bend is within the predicted Grade B contour of one VHF television station. Three other television stations are somewhat receivable on UHF. There is no cable and the only local media is a weekly newspaper.

So far about \$200,000 has been put into the three school district network. All of the money has come from state and federal government grants and private foundations. Specific sources include: Reader's Digest, Mardag Foundation, ESEA Title IV-C, Minnesota Council for Quality Education, Minnesota Rural Development Council, Woodland Vocational Center, Northwest Area Foundation, ECSU-5, The University of Georgia, Station WDSE-TV of Duluth, Station KCMT-TV of Alexandria and Station KSTP-TV of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

One recent addition to the funding coffers is a bill passed by the Minnesota State Legislature last session providing monies for the maintenance of the low power television transmission project in Independent School District No. 790. That's Eagle Bend.

According to the station's program director and Eagle Bend School principal Richard Lundgren, the biggest problem for the station is programming, both in terms of quality and quantity. There are only so many local events in a community the size of Eagle Bend, and the station budget is almost nonexistent in terms of purchasing programming.

Still, there are budding stars. Dairy farmer Orville Farrell and his son go out and do a tag-team video number for all the school wrestling matches, no matter what town they're in. Eager students at all of the station sites anchor the news, videotape the local churches' Sunday services, proms, graduation ceremonies — anything which takes place in any of the three school districts is fair game to Richard Lundgren. He says by the end of last school year about 95% of the work at the station was being done by students, with additional community involvement. And it's the kids who make it all worth it for Lundgren.

"We send the kids out with \$5,000 worth of equipment and they come back with programs. Maybe it helps us all realize within ourselves that there's a real quality in providing of oneself to better a community."

Alaska

Presently, there are two low power TV systems in Alaska which together represent some 300 "mini-TV" stations in bush villages across the state. And according to the State Deputy Commissioner for Telecommunications, Alex Hills, that number of stations will expand to 400 by 1983. During the last few months of 1981, the FCC granted construction permits for an additional 100 LPTV stations in Alaska.

You may ask how is it Alaska can have so much low power television while the rest of the country waits for the FCC to take a forward step in the regulatory process? The answer lies in the terrain, according to Clay Pendarvis, who is responsible for processing low power applications at the Commission.

"We've utilized the concept of LPTV in Alaska for ten years because it's the only economically feasible method of communication in a land

where it may be 500 miles from one village of 50 people to the next." (What he doesn't mention is that there is also a very strong state lobby in Washington, D.C.)

It was in 1973 that the FCC granted Alaska's first experimental "mini-TV" station license to the school board of the village of Unalaska. The programming for that station and two others that followed on its heels, was recorded on $\frac{3}{4}$ " video cassette tapes and flown to the villages on a regular schedule. Starting in 1976, the bicycling concept of delivering programming gradually began to convert to the state's present satellite system. Today, most, if not all, of the 300 stations use the Satcom II communications satellite as their studio link.

The two low power systems are TVDP, the Television Demonstration Project, known as the Satellite Demonstration Project and LEARN-Alaska, also known as the Alaska Instructional TV Project. Both systems are state-owned and are paid for by tax dollars. Hills says each system costs about \$5 million.

TVDP is a composite feed of delayed broadcast, a mix of broad public and commercial television. Its purpose is to provide traditional television services, mostly entertainment, to geographically isolated Alaskan communities (that's most of the state). A committee of rural television watchers govern what programming is aired on the stations, most of which are VHF 10 watters. At the present time, there is no local origination on these stations, except, in some instances, those that are co-located with LEARN-Alaska stations.

LEARN-Alaska's system originates in Anchorage and involves more than 100 low power stations. It's intent is to provide instructional programming to Alaska's bush communities (anything more than 25 full-time residents). Educational programming on the predominantly 10 watt VHF stations runs from pre-school to college level courses. Besides that, consumer education and community health care programs are uplinked from various regional centers around the state and beamed into homes. Like Eagle Bend, there is also a teleconferencing capability in the system which has been used for statewide town meetings and by classrooms in the bush.

Although the FCC hesitates to acknowledge Alaska's low power system's success in terms of regulating the service in other remote parts of the U.S. (or anywhere for that matter), Hills firmly believes the state should be viewed as a model of appropriate technology.

"We're bullish on low power TV up here in Alaska."

Spanish International Network

The Spanish International Network owns or programs 160 affiliates of which 16 are television stations and the rest are cable channels. Of those 16 television holdings, two of the affiliates hold the only purely low power experimental licenses. One of those is Washington D.C.'s Channel 56, which most likely will be moving to Channel 14 in the near future, and Denver's Channel 31. All of the systems air S.I.N.'s totally Spanish-speaking all-commercial programming, which is fed via satellite from KWEX in San Antonio, Texas. The network allows no local origination, including advertising, on any system. About one-fourth of the programming is produced here in the U.S. The rest comes from Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries.

According to Beill Stiles, S.I.N. Executive V.P., the network's interest in low power dates back to 1976 when it petitioned the FCC to open up broadcasting to minorities in both urban and rural areas. Stiles claims that petition began the whole low power inquiry. To date, almost two dozen LPTV applicants have filed to be affiliates of the Spanish-speaking network. But Stiles says the network is not pleased with the way the proposed rules were written.

"We saw then and see now, low power TV as a means to get minorities into broadcasting, but the rules turned out to be too broad, they opened the proposed system too wide. Pay TV is a bastardization of what we had in mind when we first submitted our petition."

Frank Marrero, head of S.I.N.'s network production says "Low Power does not pay with a one kilowatt station. In order to produce community outreach programs and public affairs, you need a fully equipped station, with a larger audience than we

can claim with the coverage of a one kilowatt. Advertisers won't commit to anything until the station is operational; the only thing that would make a difference is if cable was forced to carry the low power stations."

Despite S.I.N.'s frustration with, or lack of interest in LPTV, the network provides an important, maybe essential service to some 20 million Spanish-speaking people in the U.S. In that regard, it serves as a model of minority broadcast voices, it opens perspectives for America's Hispanics.

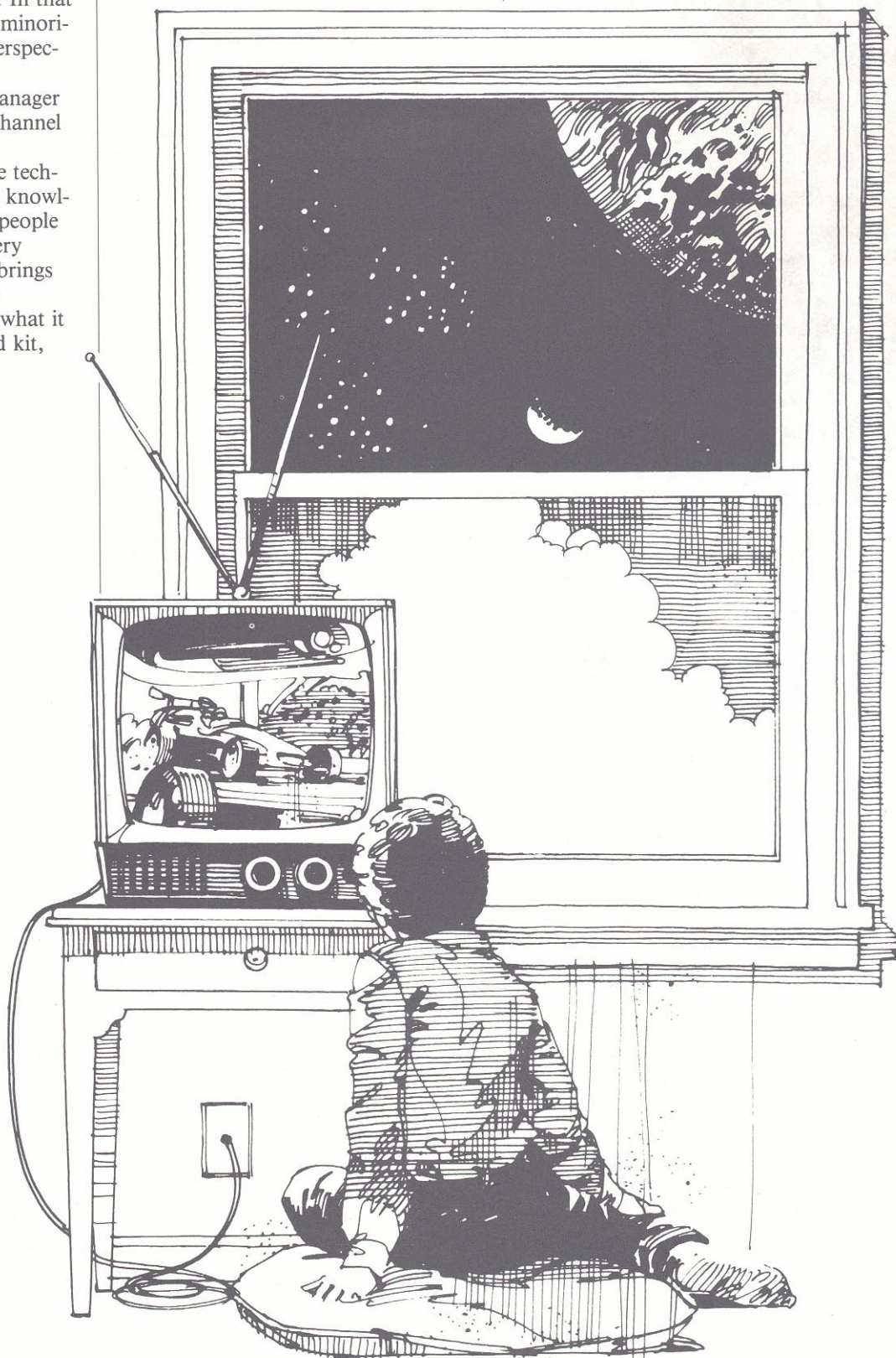
Maria Dabancens, station manager for Washington's low power Channel 56 says it like this:

"It is about time we used the technology and the science, the big knowledge there is, on behalf of the people and for a better life. I like it very much that the network S.I.N. brings you hundreds of public service announcements, telling people what it is you should have as a first aid kit,

how important it is to take vitamins every day, that you buy in the supermarket healthy things. Telling people good things. I mean you're not telling them go buy designer jeans and chewing gum. It's orienting people a little bit with the little resources that you have to try and find other ways of enjoying life. Take care of their health, go to school, be a good neighbor.

bor. It's a matter of trying to survive. But also to better our lives. I see that television is the most important way of communication you can ever find. It's education, it's information, it's everything."

Terrell Lamb is the editor of the LPTV Reporter, published monthly in Washington, D.C.



Resources for Low Power Station Development

by Pat Watkins

Many organizations exist which can provide some aid during application, construction and operation of a low power station. Programming and financing information are in separate articles in this issue.

Information

Because so much about LPTV will be changing quickly in the next year in regards to engineering, FCC processing, financing and programming, it's essential that potential operators keep close watch on developments. The two following monthly periodicals are exclusively devoted to information concerning low power:

LPTV Reporter
P.O. Box 1567
Washington, D.C. 20013
202/822-9290

and

Low-Power Community TV
7432 East Diamond
Scottsdale, AZ 85257
602/945-6746

Other helpful periodicals and newsletters are the National Translator Association's monthly bulletin, *Broadcasting* magazine, *Access* magazine, and the LPTV Hotline's monthly update.

Three upcoming booklets will provide excellent, in-depth information on low power:

1. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting will reprint its *Low-Power Television Handbook* in Spring 1982. This book will provide an introduction to the LPTV service, examine costs and show a sample application. Write to CPB for a copy: 1111 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
2. The National Center for Appropriate Technology's Montana office will publish or reproduce a study on a rural co-op LPTV station next fall. Write to NCAT for a copy.
3. The Benton Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting will soon publish a comprehensive study on the programming and financial possibilities for LPTV stations using several models. Write to

CPB for a copy: 1111 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Engineering

Many different methods of LPTV application development are possible, from hiring a firm to do the entire project to members of an organization developing the whole application themselves. An application done by the first method in a major market might cost several thousand dollars and take a few days. The other end of the development spectrum might take several months and cost about \$300.

Sources of partial engineering aid (both for application development and maintenance of an operating station) are numerous. Some engineers in your area may be willing to help with portions of your application — antenna site selection, coverage patterns, area reception habits, etc. Local PBS, NPR, community radio stations and cable access centers are good places to look for engineering help. Engineers at existing translator and other low power stations may be the best source for experienced technical help. Contact the National Translator Association for referrals. Most LPTV equipment manufacturers can help with specific system design needs and will give advice over the phone.

And, of course, the Low Power Television Hotline has been set up to help non-profit organizations with a variety of engineering needs.

Operations

The following organizations and stations can provide help developing specific plans for a station and various models for operation.

National Translator Association
Paul Evans, Administrative Secretary/
Treasurer
Suite #2100, 36 S. State
Salt Lake City, UT 84147
801/237-2623

The NTA represents hundreds of translator stations around the country and has been very instrumental in the development of the low power service. Their membership can help with engineering, fundraising and general station operations.

National Federation of Community Broadcasters
1314 14th St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
202/797-8991

An organization of community-built and operated radio stations, NFCB has members in most areas of the country with extensive FCC, broadcast engineering, and fundraising experience.

National Federation of Local Cable Programmers
906 Pennsylvania Avenue S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
202/544-7272

NFLCP members have extensive video training experience and understanding of national video sources. Access centers have performed many activities similar to LPTV stations.

American Community Television Association (ACTVA)
One Court Square
Montgomery, AL 36111
205/265-4444

A recently-formed LPTV trade association.

National Association of Low Power Television Stations
17 Washington Street
P.O. Box 4990
Norwalk, CT 06856

A recently-formed LPTV trade association.

Existing Low Power Television Stations: (See Terrell Lamb's article in this issue for details.)

State of Alaska
Division of Telecommunications Systems
5900 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507
c/o Mel Hoversten, Director
909/269-5744

Bill Humphrey
Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)
New York State Educational Department
Bureau of Educational Communications
Room 325 Educational Building
Albany, NY 12234
518/474-5823

Richard Lundgren
Eagle Bend High School
District 70
Box K
Eagle Bend, MN 56446
218/738-6442

Programming Resources for LPTV Programmers

by Joan Gudel

Many program sources which are ideal for LPTV stations are already familiar to *CTR* readers. Local, even neighborhood programs will be one of the best uses of LPTV air time. Cable access centers, area educational institutions and independent producers may be the most frequently used program sources for non-commercial LPTV stations.

A few of the many national program sources follow. Remember that you must have proper rights to films and tapes before airing them and commercial, non-commercial broadcast and cablecast rights and prices are often quite different.

Appalachian Community Service Network (ACSN)
1200 New Hampshire Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20036
202/331-8100

A public service network that produces and distributes educational and instructional programming usually via satellite for cable systems, but is interested in the possibilities of low power as a means of distribution.

Independent Cinema Artists and Producers (ICAP)
625 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10012
212/533-9180

A non-profit media arts association founded by independent filmmakers mainly aids film and video artists to seek distribution through cable TV, public TV, and home video.

Media Network
208 W. 13th Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
212/620-0877

A network that includes media producers, distributors, and funding sources that work to use media to inform, empower, and inspire. They are working on developing a list of alternative video and film productions.

Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF)
625 Broadway, 9th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10012
212/473-3240

The association that fathered ICAP, AIVF aids independents that work outside traditional commercial studios to protect and enhance their opportunities.

Independent Film & Video Distribution Center (IFVDC)
6801 West 117th St.
Broomfield, CO 80020
303/469-5234

A group of independents that have been packaging programming of filmmakers & videomakers for public television throughout the U.S. — they have also been distributing via satellite.

New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC)
2010 Magazine St.
New Orleans, LA 70130

NOVAC produces and distributes survival information programming for low income groups to waiting rooms in the New Orleans area.

University Community Video
425 Ontario SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414

They distribute alternative documentaries covering the women's movement, oppression of Native Americans, the treatment of the handicapped, and other issues.

Downtown Community Television
87 Lafayette St.
New York, N.Y. 10013

Every year the center produces over 200 programs about community art, culture, local news, and documentaries. These tapes are in more than 15 languages. They supply tapes to public and commercial television alike.

Federal Agencies

All films and videotapes produced by the federal government are free to the public. The Department of the Defense is the AV clearinghouse for this programming. They have catalogues available that list all the available programs.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Parks, and NASA produce the best films. NASA also sends all of its space shuttle feeds free via satellite to anyone who points their dish in the right direction.

Film Distributors

Modern Talking Films and Encyclopedia Britannica have some films available for free or for distribution costs.

ESAA-TV
Great Plains National TV Library
P.O. Box 80669
Lincoln, NE 68501
402/472-2007

About 600 hours of programming that was produced with funds from the Emergency School Aid Act are available for distribution costs — usually \$25 per episode.

Public Broadcasting Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza West SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

Agency for Instructional Television (AIT)
1111 West 17th St.
Bloomington, IN 47401
812/339-0023

AIT produces and distributes fine educational children's programming. They usually form consortiums with public stations and distribute to them. But they are now seeking other means of distribution. The series "Footsteps" is produced by AIT.

Media Bus, Inc.
120 Tinker St.
Woodstock, N.Y. 12498

A non-profit video production organization that produces shows of its own and assists independent producers. The company has actual LPTV experience.

Universities

Antioch, Syracuse, Ohio State and Indiana University produce films that are available free or for rental costs.

Embassies & Travel Agencies

Films that promote certain countries or airlines are available. Some are quite good and have very little advertising.

Public Domain Films

Many films in the public domain are listed in the 17 volume *Film Super List — 200,000 Films in the Public Domain*. These films are often available free of charge from local libraries. Commercial film distributors will also send lists of public domain films which they distribute.

Joan Gudel is Administrative Assistant of the NFLCP at the Washington, D.C. office.

Who Wants Low Power Stations?

by Pat Watkins

Information on who has filed for low power stations and analysis of applicant plans has been very sketchy. Many future operators are unsure of the potential of this untested service, application forms do not request much detail, and almost no comprehensive studies have been made.

In August 1981, as part of a Corporation for Public Broadcasting — Benton Foundation study, the NFLCP Low Power Television Hotline examined the approximately 4,000 LPTV applications on file. We looked at each application to determine if it was from a for-profit or not-for-profit corporation, and then examined the financial and programming plans for each non-profit.

The most significant information gained from that portion of the study was the disturbingly low number of applications from non-profit organizations (16%) and the even lower number of applications proposing non-commercial operation (323 applications — 8%). More than one-third of those non-commercial applications were for stations in Alaska. Most of the remaining ones are in direct competition for frequency space with several commercial applicants and therefore may not become operating stations.

To put these statistics in perspective, over 33% of the FM radio stations in this country are operated non-commercially, over 25% of full powered TV stations are non-commercial. Since, unlike the FM and full power TV services, the FCC has not reserved any portion of available spectrum space for non-commercial LPTV operations, there is no guarantee there will be *any* non-commercial stations. And because of the overwhelming commercial interest in LPTV, non-profit groups will probably not enjoy the relaxed filing timetable possible in the other services, further decreasing those non-profit groups who will apply. Available channel space within most areas will be gone within a couple of years.

The Commission has received approximately 2,000 additional LPTV applications since our initial study. An informal perusal of those applications indicates that they contain a much smaller percentage of non-commercial than the original groups studied did, reducing that earlier non-commercial number below 8 percent.

This indicates that without substantial increases in the number of non-commercial applications or significant preferences for them in competitive

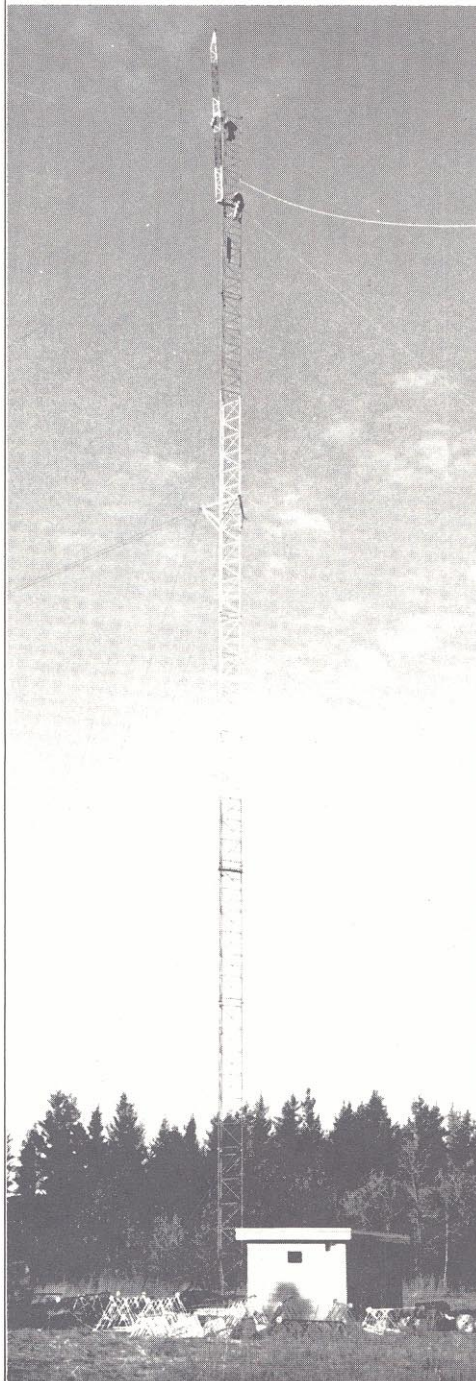
situations, non-commercial stations will be an inconsequential portion of the LPTV service.

As an extensive track record has proven, there are tremendous community benefits directly resulting from non-commercial broadcasting. Non-commercial broadcasters have placed community service as their primary and often exclusive priority. They have introduced large numbers of the viewing and listening public to educational and instructional programming, programming for special ethnic and handicapped audiences, children's and senior citizens' programming, new levels of art and dramatic programming, and experimental uses of broadcasting.

Non-commercial broadcasters involve unprecedented numbers of community members in program production and station decision making. Many have achieved impressive training and placement records for women and minorities. The vast majority of non-commercial LPTV applicants plan significant local, educational, cultural and public affairs programming, while most commercial applicants plan scrambled systems with programming provided by satellite feeds.

One way that the FCC could partially compensate for the lack of reserved channel space would be to give a strong preference to non-commercial applicants in any lottery, comparative hearing or paper evidentiary hearing system used to resolve competing situations. The most effective way for non-profit, non-commercial aspirants to assure their representation in this new technology is to increase the number of proposals submitted to the FCC. The occurrence of both of these possibilities will provide for maximum community service in Low Power Television.

Having worked in community radio and television for a decade, Pat Watkins is now Director of the NFLCP's Low Power Television Hotline.



NFLCP Members Turn to Low Power TV to Reach New Audiences

Many NFLCP members are applying for low power stations either as individuals or non-profit access centers.

Some reasons for this interest from cable access centers include an increased independence from the cable owner, increased viewership and more diverse program mix. This desire for independence from the cable system involves control over more broadcast hours, more control over program content, development and funding, fewer ongoing negotiations with both the cable operator and regulator and permanent access to a distribution mechanism.

Ways in which low power can help an access center reach new audiences are by broadcasting to households who choose not to subscribe, covering rural areas which may never be cabled or using the low power station's signal to interconnect two or more distant cable systems. The final LPTV rules are not expected to require cable systems to carry low power stations. Thus, for insured access to substantial cable populations, the LPTV operator must have mandatory LPTV carriage written into local franchise agreements or make firm lease arrangements with operators. (At least one cable company has filed for an LPTV station as part of its franchise bid).

Operating a broadcast station in addition to a public access channel will be a way for access centers to expand programming beyond locally produced open access limitations. PBS programs, old films, early television serials, videotapes and films by independent producers (mentioned in Jeff Nightbyrd's article in this issue) all quickly come to mind as likely program material. These program expansions may help to broaden audiences, funding sources and assist in filling the program day.

Individual NFLCP members who apply for LPTV stations are usually hoping to make a living and provide quality programming on a semi-commercial venture. Several non-profit organizations which have worked on





national telecommunications issues with NFLCP, like the National Citizens Committee on Broadcasting, United Auto Workers, ACORN, and Global Village Video, have filed for multiple LPTV stations.

A few NFLCP members' plans:

- The Center for New Television in Chicago wants to use an LPTV station as a prelude to a full service one. Many non-profit applicants are concerned that low power may provide the only TV access system in some cities while cable franchising and installation is delayed.
- The Howard County Community Access Center in Maryland wants to assume many duties usually provided by a public access center. They want to contract with the city/cable system to provide either a total or partial signal to the access channel. A major goal is to reach uncabled rural audiences.
- Open Channel in Fayetteville, Arkansas, has been investigating the use of LPTV stations to provide their programs to communities and cable systems in nine surrounding counties. This would stimulate program development in those commu-

nities who would in turn feed new programs to Open Channel.

- Grassroots Video in California hopes to operate several LPTV stations in the Bay area. Local programming, especially news and public affairs, will be high priorities. The stations will provide access for several cities and for the substantial independent film and video community.
- Berks Community Television in Pennsylvania plans on using LPTV to reach the uncabled rural areas of its county. It will largely duplicate programming on the access channel and may share air time with the local educational community, independent producers and area hospitals.

The Hotline is interested in forming an LPTV caucus within NFLCP as a way for members to be informed of LPTV progress and help develop LPTV policy and the availability of access time on LPTV stations. Contact the Hotline to make suggestions and get on our mailing list.

This is a list of some of the access centers and NFLCP members who are involved with low power television:

Video Action Center	Columbus, IN	applicant
William Paterson College	Wayne, NJ	applicant
Berks Community TV	Reading, PA	applicant
Rising Sun	Santa Fe, NM	applicant
International Cultural Network	Atlanta, GA	multiple applicant
John Fox	Tampa, FL	applicant
Grassroots Video	Berkley, CA	multiple applicant
Atlanta Media Project	Atlanta, GA	applicant
Quote Unquote	Albuquerque, NM	applicant
Western Colorado Telecommunications Consortium	Colorado	applicant
Center for New TV	Chicago, IL	applicant
Possible Future Applicants:		
Howard Community Access Center	Columbia, MD	
Channel 3	Bloomington, IN	
Richard Morgan	Savannah, GA	
Neal Gosman	St. Paul, MN	
Channel 20	Knoxville, TN	
Austin Community TV	Austin, TX	
Cable Ten	Frankfort, KY	
Open Channel	Fayetteville, AR	
NOVAC	New Orleans, LA	

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Low Power Television

The Federal Communications Commission's Low Power Television service has attracted thousands of groups and individuals who have submitted over 5,000 applications to date, responding to the rare opportunity to own the communications medium that has fascinated an entire generation.

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The FCC says that "Low Power Television" broadcasting is the first new broadcast service considered by the Commission in 20 years.

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Low Power stations will be authorized on all TV channels, 2-69.

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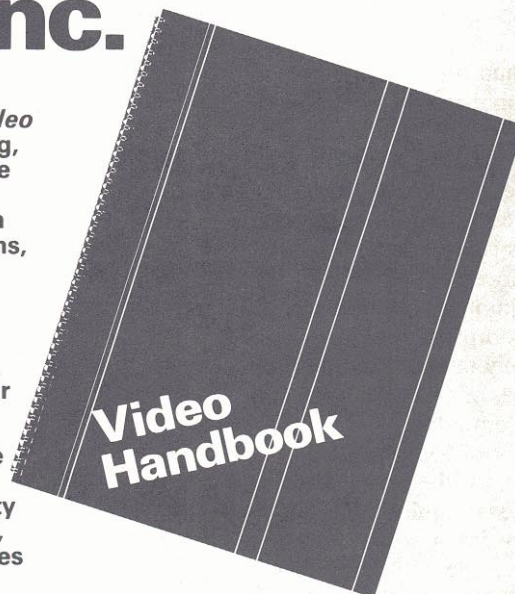
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Some Old Tricks, Some New

Financing Low Power Television Stations

by Jerry Richter, Pat Watkins and Mary Wright

Low Power Television presents a unique opportunity both for existing access centers in already cabled areas and for new community access groups in rural areas which have not yet been and may never be cabled. Basically, this new use of technology means that narrow-cast, community-access programming, previously available only on some cable systems, will now be available "over the air." For existing cable access centers this can mean reaching non-cable subscribers within their communities and some rural areas, unserved by cable, which may exist outside the franchise area.

However, the broadcast nature of this service raises some problems not usually encountered by those of us experienced in the field of cable access. First of all, a low power transmitter requires an FCC license with all that this implies: frequency search, engineering exhibits, transmitter site location, etc. Secondly, it requires capital expenditures beyond the normal production equipment and staffing levels of most access centers. The expenses involved in implementing low power service fall into two categories: construction and operation.

Construction expenses involve such items as engineering, legal assistance in site location and rental, transmitter purchase price, tower construction, installation, etc. The low power application process is not complicated; however, engineering help should be retained to complete the engineering portion and comparative shopping here is definitely in order. In the writer's experience, prices quoted for this task ranged from a high of \$2,500-\$3,000 to a low of \$750.

The engineers will need the exact location of the transmitter which requires that a site be selected and that there be some evidence of commitment as to its accessibility. Ideally, the transmitter site should be as high as possible in order to maximize the range of the signal.

It may be possible to make arrangements with existing tower owners for space on their structures. For instance, a cable company may be persuaded to permit an access group to locate its transmitter on the head-end antenna mast. This arrangement may be to the cable operator's advantage since it will provide a sample of cable programming to non-subscribers and could be used as a marketing tool in exchange for site rental.

Naturally, the greatest portion of construction costs is the purchase and installation of the transmitter and antenna. Average costs will range between \$6,000-\$10,000 for a 10 watt VHF station, \$17,000-\$40,000 for a 100 watt UHF station, and \$60,000 and up for a 1000 watt UHF station. The costs for tower construction, studio equipment and any satellite reception equipment would be extra and vary greatly.

Except for the actual cost of electricity required to operate the transmitter (\$50 to \$150 per month) and for provision of maintenance (approximately \$200 per month), operating expenses should be comparable to those of a cable access center. So, if simulcast with an access center is planned, operating expenses will be minimal. The low power rules do not require broadcast quality production equipment, any minimum hours of broadcast or that the transmitter be attended by an engineer.

The FCC does not require that an applicant have cash on hand to build and operate an LPTV station at the moment an application is filed. Instead, they demand reasonably substantiated plans that the applicant will have funds shortly after permission to build is given (called a construction permit). Certainly cash in the bank eliminates the fear that the Commission (or more likely a competing applicant) will challenge an applicant

on the basis of financial capability. A fund-raising plan based on past successes, pending applications to several foundations, or loan guarantees from potential area viewers, will be sufficient at the application stage.

Support needed to plan and operate an LPTV station, when combined with creative gusto, can materialize from a variety of sources. The formation of local consortia may be the most promising. A consortium of potential users consisting of local arts and cultural groups, ethnic and neighborhood organizations and social service agencies will provide a broad funding base. Each of these groups would be able to approach their own traditional funding sources for a portion of the total costs. At least two organizations have expanded this user-funded idea by proposing co-op LPTV stations. Puget Sound Co-op Broadcasting in Seattle, Washington, and Montanans for Quality Television in Missoula, Montana, have both received some support from the National Consumer Co-op Bank.

Several states (Missouri, Indiana, Delaware, Florida, Michigan, and Pennsylvania) offer substantial tax credits to corporations who support non-profit organizations in their communities, particularly if those organizations provide services to low-income people or minorities. If the potential licenses for a low-power transmitter can become certified under such a state program, this provides a significant inducement for corporate contributions. And if this tax-credit incentive is combined with some sort of underwriting recognition on a television station, contributions are increasingly interesting. These programs are called Neighborhood Assistance Programs or Community Improvement Programs in the above states.

Traditional funding sources for public broadcasting, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (operations) and the Public Telecommunications

Facilities Program (construction) are deferring decisions on regular aid to LPTV stations until final service rules are written. While their funds will decline over the next years and existing public television stations will remain their highest priority, some support should be expected from them (especially in very rural areas).

A few national foundations have a history of funding the construction of telecommunication projects, particularly those with specific low-income/minority/rural orientation. Regional foundations may be a more likely source for most community television projects.

Some LPTV applicants hope to lease air time to others (for commercial broadcast, data transmission, multiple listing home tours for real estate sales, etc.) in order to receive additional operating funds. Some lease-time purchasers may even help with construction costs. Other applicants may join various STV (subscription TV service) networks to produce regular revenues. However these are very expensive systems, beyond the range of most applicants. One LPTV magazine has been suggesting that sales of the vertical blanking interval (and other parts of the broadcast signal which viewers don't see) might also be a source of regular income.

Institutional support from area organizations who would use an LPTV station's air time but are not interested in operating a station may be an important source of in-kind or cash contributions. For instance an area medical institution may wish to exchange office space for one hour of air time weekly, or an educational consortium might provide production equipment in exchange for a block of daytime hours.

Each area will have its own unique sources of support. One NFLCP member, a commercial applicant, found that certain banks are restricted

to advertising within their very small service areas (hence no full powered TV station ads). When a local bank realized that the LPTV station would provide their first access to TV advertising, it was eager to loan funds for construction.

In economically depressed areas, LPTV applicants with strong low-income programming and training plans could make a good case for receiving Community Development Block Grant Funds, especially for construction. Contact local city/county government offices for more information.

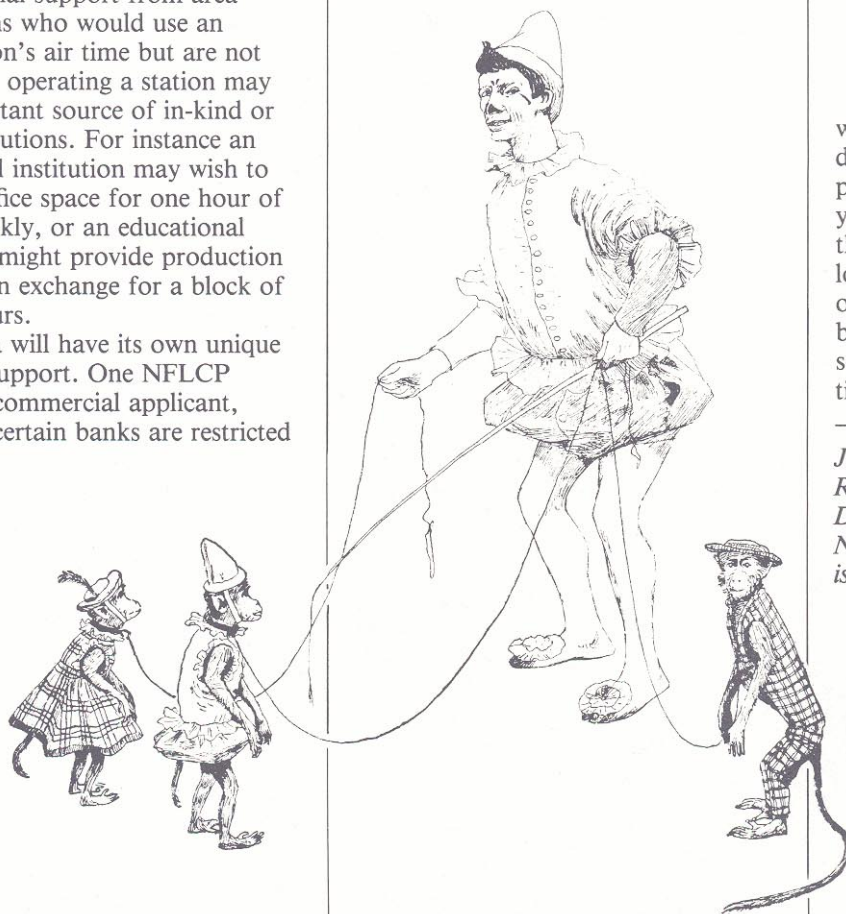
Talk to development directors at area cable access centers, community radio stations, or NPR and PBS stations for additional fundraising strategies. Cable access centers and community radio stations are masters at keeping costs low, utilizing large numbers of volunteers and other in-kind contributions and developing unusual sources of funding. Many methods which have not been adequately rewarding for large NPR or PBS stations may well meet the reduced cost needs of an LPTV station. Don't forget the obvious methods of fundraising that these stations have pioneered: underwriting, telethons, auctions and viewer subscriptions.

A few general hints on financial planning include:

- Keep overhead costs as low as possible, especially for the first few years. This will allow for a gradually developing subscriber/underwriter/grant base.
- Keeping an updated five-year financial plan will help your station's internal development, goal achievement and fundraising.
- Don't forget an adequate budget for publicity. PR on your new station, which will be a totally new form of broadcast service with a small coverage range, will be essential.
- Wait until your station (administration, production, funding, etc.) is sufficiently developed to begin broadcasting. As one cable access organizer stated "you can live longer on a concept than on the air half-assed."
- Be conservative in planning the number of hours you'll be broadcasting. Make sure that what you air will attract an audience and then gradually build as your resources grow.
- Unless you have very experienced TV engineers, beware of buying used transmission and microwave equipment. Start with minimal but reliable equipment since unexpected time off the air can destroy your credibility and audience development work.

Financial planning for a service which has just begun is admittedly difficult and, of course, starting new projects is even harder given this year's funding climate. But remember that LPTV will be the first and last low-cost opportunity for community organizations to control television broadcast outlets and that models and sources for funding will emerge relatively quickly.

Jerry Richter is a consultant with Rice Richter Associates, Washington, D.C.; Pat Watkins is Director of the NFLCP LPTV Hotline; Mary Wright is an assistant at the Hotline.



Interaction

Will Low Power TV Become Just Another Vast Wasteland?

"We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas, but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate."

Henry David Thoreau - 1854

by Jeffrey Nightbyrd

In the flurry to acquire low power television licenses, Thoreau's century old insight may still be missed. Low power television could mean even more drivel cluttering the air waves, anesthetizing the minds of the many, and with its picayune programming budgets herald a new low in mindless electronic blather.

Let's face it, without careful preparation, low power TV could mean an endless stream of stupid shows, delivered with hideous technical standards. The promise of enriching, and involving TV is just that — a promise. In the stampede to acquire licenses, few applicants have really thought through their programming concepts.

Obviously most commercial applicants are going to rely on satellite subscription TV services to deliver much of their programming. In fact, a number of these services caught in a highly competitive struggle to be placed on a limited number of cable channels, have already made overtures to LPTV applicants. Select TV which offers a variety of movies and specials was courting potential affiliates at the National Translator Association's 1981 annual conference.

Other non-subscription satellite services are also seeking LPTV outlets. Their arrangements generally provide for free programming with eight minutes of national advertising, leaving four minutes of advertising to be sold locally.

With some 20 plus "networks" ranging from the new Health Network to Daytime, the Hearst/ABC women's channel, commercial programming is rapidly becoming a buyers market. Already some satellite systems are talking about offering everything from a dish for receiving signals, to a percentage of national advertising.

The problem with rebroadcasting satellite TV is that low power's promise is to offer unique local programming to localities without their own television source and areas of larger cities that are under represented. Many low power entrepreneurs, considering towns in the 15 to 50 thousand population range, plan to run locally originated programming and supplement it with subscription or satellite feeds.

A close examination of the budget constraints of most low power TV stations demonstrates that any programming will have to be acquired for from \$50 to \$100 an hour. Immediately one's mind turns to classic movies and television as a potential source of inexpensive quality programming. Groucho Marx's *You Bet Your Life*, *The Twilight Zone*, *The Honeymooners*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, are all examples of early television shows in black and white that may be suitable for LPTV.

Likewise film festivals such as the Bogart, Gable, or Mae West weeks, or the Worst Science Fiction Films of All Time could draw respectable audiences. Obviously no market exists to establish LPTV film and video rates yet. But I visited a number of film distributors in Los Angeles and found that in package deals they seemed quite willing to meet the \$50 to \$100 an hour range. In fact for many of the cowboy, horror and Sci-Fi films of a bygone era, the price of duplication will outstrip the rental fee.

What this proves is that programming an LPTV station is possible using standard fare. The challenge is to offer something unique. That's where the idea of an alternative pro-

gramming cooperative offering satire, music, investigative pieces, documentaries, even new age soaps — in short, programs that differ from the prime time sex and violence format — comes in. When the low power processing finally shakes loose, there'll probably be 200 to 300 stations, both commercial and non-commercial, operated by individuals and groups with a wish to do something more than rebroadcast commercial TV.

One movement in this direction is sponsored by KBDI-TV, an independent educational station in the Denver market, and groups of independent video producers including Videowest, SITE Productions in Boston, Public Interest Video Network in Washington and the Center for New Television in Chicago. The goal is to form an independently controlled production and distribution system. Operating under the banner of WINDOW, preliminary steps have been made to involve independent video producers in satellite distribution of programming. For further information on WINDOW, call 415-957-9080 or 202-797-8977.

The video producers in these organizations will generally need to sell their programs for more money than individual LPTV stations can offer. An LPTV programming cooperative would utilize satellite distribution during non-prime time hours for later use. An LPTV cooperative would give the video artist access to a national audience, and enough revenue to eat that month and produce another show.

The economics look something like this: say a show was produced on dolphin/human communication by the alternative LPTV station in Bellingham, Washington. If the show was offered to a cooperative for \$75 and 200 stations bought it, that's a gross of \$15,000. After distribution costs are taken out, \$8,000 or \$9,000 are left for the producer. Not fat, but for an alternative network, it's cheap enough for the stations, yet lucrative enough for the local video producer. An even larger cooperative combining LPTV stations, cable access centers and the more progressive PBS stations has great potential.

An alternative LPTV network, much like the underground press in the 1960s, which provided opportunities for a new generation of journalists, could also be significant in changing the content of television. The video artists with good ideas and no distribution outlets will have a chance through LPTV. Like many in the underground press who wound up at the *New York Times*, LPTV producers will have a chance to perfect their craft and later work in big budget situations.

It's the chance of giving a new generation outside the Hollywood-fast-lane of network nonsense an opportunity, that makes LPTV programming so exciting. Because as these new programmers attract the more intelligent and aware audiences, television as a whole will have to change.

Jeffrey Nightbyrd is a Low Power Television consultant and media critic based in Los Angeles. For more information, call Jeff at 213-399-6380.



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Hazard, Michael

The Lively Arts vs. Mainstream Culture. Michael Hazard. 4:24-25 April '81.

Held, Jonathan

Mid-York Library System Provides Greater Diversity in Cable Programming. Jonathan Held. 4:44-45 Oct '81.

Hometown, U.S.A.

NFLCP 1980 Report to the Members. 4:19-24 July '81.

NFLCP Hometown Video Awards. 4:22 Oct '81.

Independent Producers

By The Time We Got to Woodstock . . . Producing Art for Television: The Process of Interacting with Audiences. Bart Friedman. 4:16-17 April '81.

Interactive Television

Interactive Panel Highlight of Fall Conference. Jerry Richter. 4:6 Ja '81.

Irvine Project Puts Kids in Control of Futuristic Technologies (Interaction). Craig Ritter. 4:16-18 Ja '81.

Berks Community TV's Interactive Ability is Integral Part of Reading City Government. Jerry Richter. 4:8-9 July '81.

Madison's Citicable-12 Struggles for Life While Bringing City Issues Closer to People. Andy Beecher. 4:32-33 July '81.

The Misuse of Term "Interactive"; Ability of People to Talk to People Should be Assured in Cable Design (Interaction). Jerry Richter. 4:34-35 July '81.

Jesuale, Nancy

Assuring Information Equality: Universal Service is a Realistic Option. Nancy Jesuale. 4:31 July '81.

NFLCP Board of Directors Meeting. Nancy Jesuale. 4:22 Oct '81.

Johnson, Larry D.

Minneapolis Children's Hospital Channel Performs Valuable Services on Low Budget. Larry D. Johnson. 4:9-11 Ja '81.

Knoxville Channel 20

Knoxville's Channel 20 Involves a Diverse Community in Public Access Center (Access Profile). George C. Stoney. 4:8-10 Oct '81.

Langley, Michael

Expectations vs. Reality in Atlanta. Michael Langley. 4:28-29 July '81.

Lehman, Rosemary M.

Centering Television: An Approach to Making Television a Positive Classroom Tool. Rosemary M. Lehman. 4:19-21 Ja '81.

Libraries and Cable Television

Levels of Library Involvement in Cable TV. 4:36 Oct '81.

Libraries Must Diversify Services to Insure Community Access to Information. Lynne Bradley. 4:37-39 Oct '81.

Traditional Functions of Libraries In Question; Broader Awareness Needed. Marilyn J. Rehnberg. 4:40 Oct '81.

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Libraries and Satellites

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Libraries Role in Information Dissemination

Can Librarians Best Serve Their Community as Disseminators or Producers of Information? Katherine Gardner Cipolla. 4:42-43 Oct '81.

Idaho Library Meets Unique Needs of Community. Paul Tamminen. 4:46-47 Oct '81.

Iowa City Library's New Building Helps Make it a "Library for Everyone." Connie Tiffany. 4:50-51 Oct '81.

Low Power Television

Low Power Transmitters Open Up for Community Programming; FCC Taking License Applications. 4:25 Ja '81.

NFLCP Hotline Gives Help to Low Power TV Applicants. Pat Watkins. 4:4 April '81.

D.C. Site of Low Power TV Session. Carol Novalis. 4:8 April '81.

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Low Power Preconference Tells Participants, "Now is the Time." Pat Watkins. 4:24 Oct '81.

Low Power Television Hotline

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Madison's Municipal Video Service

Madison's Citicable-12 Struggles for Life While Bringing City Issues Closer to People. Andy Beecher. 4:32-33 July '81.

Makely, Bill

Colorado Groups Form Net; Albuquerque Expands Programming. Bill Makely. 4:7 April '81.

Mann, Mary E.

Rocky Mountain Teenagers Become Eager Videomakers; Learn Power and Dimensions of the Medium. Mary E. Mann. 4:14-15 Ja '81.

McCausland, Robert G.H.

Boston - The Development of a Public Access Plan. Robert G.H. McCausland. 4:25-27 July '81.

Minorities and Cable Television

Minorities and Cable Conference Draws National Attention. Jabari Simama. 4:8 Ja '81.

Municipal Channels

Expectations vs. Reality in Atlanta. Michael Langley. 4:28-29 July '81.

Madison's Citicable-12 Struggles for Life While Bringing City Issues Closer to People. Andy Beecher. 4:32-33 July '81.

National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors

City Telecommunications Regulators Form National Association. Frank Greif. 4:4 July '81.

NFLCP Advocacy Committee

The National Federation of Local Cable Programmers Advocacy Platform. 4:30-31 Oct '81.

NFLCP Annual Convention

Atlanta Expects Over 1,000 for 1981 NFLCP Convention. 4:5 Ja '81.

Minneapolis Selected to Host NFLCP's Fifth Annual Convention in 1982. 4:5 Ja '81.

Atlanta Prepares for '81 Convention; Region Plans Miami Conference. Jabari Simama. 4:6 April '81.

NFLCP 1980 Report to the Members. 4:19-24 July '81.

NFLCP Annual Report

NFLCP 1980 Report to the Members. 4:19-24 July '81.

NFLCP Board of Directors

Bond Chosen NFLCP Board Secretary. 4:5 April '81.

NFLCP Board of Directors Meeting. Nancy Jesuale. 4:22 Oct '81.

NFLCP Chairman's Message

Chairman's Message. Diana Peck. 4:4 Oct '81.

NFLCP Education Committee (Information Services)

Information Services Projects for 1981-82. Carol Brown Eilber. 4:32 Oct '81.

NFLCP Membership

NFLCP Individual Membership Grows, Number of Organizations Doubles. Susan Bednarczyk. 4:5 Ja '81.

Membership Swells After Access Eighty. Dave Bloch. 4:6 Ja '81.

NFLCP Publications

Educational Uses of Cable TV Source Book. 4:5 July '81.

NFLCP Training Program

Cable Industry Demonstrates Commitment to Training Program. 4:23 Oct '81.

NFLCP's Training Program Begins November 1 in Dayton, Ohio. Sue Miller Buske. 4:23 Oct '81.

Newbern, Bill

Madison Renegotiates Franchise; Access New for Iowa City. Bill Newbern. 4:7 Ja '81.

Madison Survives Budget Challenge; Spring Conference Set for Chicago. Bill Newbern. 4:8 April '81.

Novalis, Carol

D.C. Site of Low Power TV Session. Carol Novalis. 4:8 April '81.

Ollinger, Lilly

Arts/Cable Conference, Regional Meeting Highlight Midwest Activities. Lilly Ollinger. 4:6 Oct '81.

Owens, Brian

Towards Establishing the Notion That Media Can Bring Benefits To All. Brian Owens. 4:30-31 Ja '81.

Analysis of Cable TV Designs for New Markets. Brian Owens. 4:30 July '81.

Peck, Diana

Chairman's Message. Diana Peck. 4:4 Oct '81.

Peralta Television

Bay Area Community College Creates Cooperative Local Programming Links. (Access Profile). Anna Dabney and Paula Harrington. 4:10-11 July '81.

Piersimoni, Anna Marie

1980 Atlanta Cable TV and the Arts Conference Embraces Tough New Issues. Anna Marie Piersimoni. 4:11-12 April '81.

Program Administration

Program Administrators Taught Valuable Lessons in Atlanta Seminar. Lauren Goldfarb. 4:25 Oct '81.

Program Distribution

The Lively Arts vs. Mainstream Culture. Michael Hazard. 4:24-25 April '81.

The Public Arts Network (PAN): A New York Access Network for the Arts? William F. Rushton. 4:27-29 April '81.

Public Access Channels

Knoxville's Channel 20 Involves a Diverse Community in Public Access Center (Access Profile). George C. Stoney. 4:8-10 Oct '81.

Regulation - Cities

Standing Room Only at Lively Madison Conference on Cities and Cable. Susan Bednarczyk. 4:4 Ja '81.

Cities Must Work Hard to Assure Cable Will Meet Community Needs (Advocacy Update). Jay April. 4:29 Ja '81.

Madison Survives Budget Challenge; Spring Conference Set for Chicago. Bill Newbern. 4:8 April '81.

Old and New Cable Issues Confront Local, State and Federal Policy Makers. (Advocacy Update). Jean Rice. 4:14-18 July '81.

Regulation - States

Far West Regional Report. Constance H. Carlson. 4:7 July '81.

Old and New Cable Issues Confront Local, State and Federal Policy Makers (Advocacy Update). Jean Rice. 4:14-18 July '81.

Regulation - National

Washington, D.C. Site of NFLCP Conference on Cable Consumer Issues, February 27-28. 4:5 Ja '81.

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Rodriguez, Bob

Innovative Cable Franchise Establishes Children's Channel: KIDS 4 is For Kids, By Kids. Bob Rodriguez. 4:24 Ja '81.

Rushton, William F.

The Public Arts Network (PAN): A New York Access Network for the Arts? William F. Rushton. 4:27-29 April '81.

Sherwood, Chuck

Renewed Activity in Northeast Region Brings Word of NFLCP to More People. Chuck Sherwood. 4:7 Oct '81.

Sherman, Tom

Television By Artists in Canada: Ten Years of Cable Experience. Tom Sherman. 4:13-15 April '81.

Simama, Jabari

Minorities and Cable Conference Draws National Attention. Jabari Simama. 4:8 Ja '81.

Atlanta Prepares for '81 Convention; Region Plans Miami Conference. Jabari Simama. 4:6 April '81.

Public Access Strongly Anchored in Region's Cities. Jabari Simama. 4:7 Oct '81.

Smith, Don R.

Mechanisms to Assure Quality Kids Programming Are Within a Community's Grasp. Don R. Smith. 4:22-23 Ja '81.

Smith, Ralph Lee

Smith Tells Convention-Goers, "You're Moving From a Position of Strength." Ralph Lee Smith. 4:26-29 Oct '81.

Steinzor, Lise

Vermont Community Television Project Teaches Life Skills to 'Delinquents'; Brings Issues to Community. Lise Steinzor. 4:12-13 Ja '81.

Stoney, George C.

Who's To Say When Video Is An Illegal Weapon? (Uplink/Downlink). George C. Stoney. 4:32-33 April '81.

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United Church of Christ/Office of Communications

New Community Service Begins Operation. 4:5 July '81.

Universal Service

Assuring Information Equality: Universal Service is a Realistic Option. Nancy Jesuale. 4:31 July '81.

Video Centers

Changing Channels for the Arts; Community Video Centers as Catalyst. Tom Borup. 4:22-23 April '81.

Video Ethics

Who's To Say When Video Is An Illegal Weapon? (Uplink/Downlink). George Stoney. 4:32-33 April '81.

Video Festivals

American Film Institute and Sony Announce National Video Festival. 4:5 April '81.

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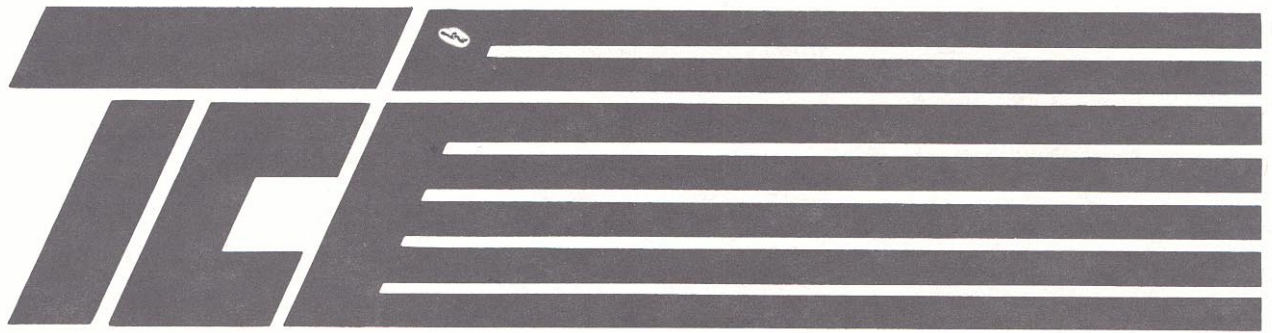
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